

CLAIMS

1. A video communication system comprising:
- (a) at least one video signal source;
  - (b) at least one video display device;
  - (c) at least one unshielded twisted pair of wires
    - (i) defining a video signal path
    - (ii) arranged for transport of video signals,
      - (1) originating at a video signal source,
      - (2) to at least one of the video display devices; and
  - (d) at least one control communication link,
    - (i) arranged for transmission of control signals
- wherein, the system is configured
- (i) to respond to control signals,
    - (1) transmitted over the control communication link,
  - (ii) to control the transport of the video signals,
    - (1) along the video signal path, and
  - (iii) to cause video image reproduction
    - (1) based on the transported video signals
    - (2) on at least one of the video display devices.

2. The system of claim 1, further comprising:

- (a) at least one switch
    - (i) in communication with the control communication link,
- wherein the system is configured
- (i) to control the switch

- (ii) to route the video signals
  - (1) from at least one video signal source,
  - (2) to at least one video display device,
  - (3) over the video signal path.

3. The system of claim 2, further comprising:

- (a) at least one server
  - (i) configured to
    - (1) control the switch.

4. The system of claim 1, further comprising

- (a) at least two video display devices
  - (i) each having an associated processor
  - (ii) to each define a workstation, and

wherein the system is configured

- (i) to control the reproduction of video images and spoken audio
    - (1) of a first workstation user
    - (2) at the workstation of a second workstation user.

5. The system of claim 4, wherein

- (a) the video signal path is separate from the control communication link.

6. The system of claim 5, wherein the system is configured to

- (a) reproduce the video images,
  - (i) at greater than 20 frames per second,
  - (ii) on at least one of the video display devices.

7. The system of claim 6, wherein
- (a) the video signals are transported in analog.

8. The system of claim 6, further comprising:
- (a) at least one audio source; and
  - (b) at least one audio reproduction device,  
wherein the system is configured to
    - (i) transport audio signals,
      - (1) originating at one of the audio sources,
      - (2) over at least one unshielded pair of wires, and
    - (ii) reproduce audio
      - (1) based on the transported audio signals
      - (iii) at one of the audio reproduction devices.

9. The system of claim 6, wherein the system is configured
- (a) to combine video images
    - (i) of at least a first and a second user
    - (ii) into a mosaic image, and
  - (b) to reproduce the mosaic image
    - (i) on at least one of the display devices.

10. The system of claim 6, wherein the system is configured:
- (a) to allow a first user
    - (i) to use a first graphical user interface

- (ii) to select a user
  - (iii) from a plurality of users;
- (b) to allow the first user
- (i) to use a second graphical user interface
  - (ii) to select a collaboration type
  - (iii) from a group of collaboration types; and
- (c) to respond
- (i) by establishing communication
  - (ii) of the selected collaboration type
  - (iii) from the first user to
  - (iv) the selected user.

11. The system of claim 5, further comprising:

- (a) at least one processing unit
- (i) capable of providing data conferencing signals;  
wherein the system is configured to
  - (i) display information,
    - (1) based on the data conferencing signals,
    - (2) on one of the display devices.

12. The system of claim 11, wherein:

- (a) images
- (i) based on the video signals
  - (ii) can be reproduced
  - (iii) in a first window on one of the display devices, and

- (b) information
- (i) based on the data conferencing signals
  - (ii) can be displayed
  - (iii) in a second window on the display device.

13. The system of claim 11, wherein

- (a) the information
- (i) based on the data conferencing signals
  - (ii) is displayed
  - (iii) interactively
  - (iv) on at least two of the display devices.

14. A method of conducting video communications,  
over at least one unshielded twisted pair of wires  
defining a video signal path

using a system including  
at least one signal source, and  
at least one video display device,

the method comprising the steps of:

- (a) generating video signals,
  - (i) at one of the video signal sources;
- (b) transporting
  - (i) the generated video signals
  - (ii) to at least one of the display devices;
- (c) transmitting

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- (d) (i) control signals  
(ii) over a control communication link,  
responding to the control signals  
(i) to control the video signal transportation  
(1) along video signal path; and  
(e) reproducing video images  
(i) based on the controlled, transported video signals  
(ii) on at least one of the video display devices.

15. The method of claim 14, further comprising the step of:

- (a) switching the video signals  
(i) from at least one of the video signal sources,  
(ii) to at least one of the video display devices,  
(iii) over the video signal path.

16. The method of claim 14, wherein

- (a) at least two video display devices  
(i) each have an associated processor  
(ii) to each define a workstation.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein

- (a) the video signal path is separate from the control communication link.

18. The method of claim 15, wherein

- (a) the video images are reproduced  
(i) at greater than 20 frames per second,

(ii) on at least one of the video display devices.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein

(a) the video signals are transported in analog.

20. The method of claim 17, further comprising the steps of:

(a) combining video images

(i) of at least a first and a second user

(ii) into a mosaic image, and

(b) reproducing the mosaic image

(i) on at least one of the video display devices.

21. The method of claim 17, further comprising the steps of:

(a) allowing a first user

(i) to use a first graphical user interface

(ii) to select a user

(iii) from a plurality of users;

(b) allowing the first user

(i) to use a second graphical user interface

(ii) to select a collaboration type

(iii) from a group of collaboration types; and

(c) responding

(i) by establishing communication

(ii) of the selected collaboration type

(iii) from the first user to

- (iv) the selected user.

22. The method of claim 17, further comprising the steps of:

  - (a) generating data conferencing signals;
  - (b) transmitting the data conferencing signals
    - (i) over at least one data communication link
    - (ii) to at least one of the video display device; and
  - (c) displaying information,
    - (i) based on the transmitted data conferencing signals,
    - (ii) on the video display device.

23. The method of claim 22, further comprising the steps of:

  - (a) reproducing images
    - (i) based on the video signals
    - (ii) in a first window on the video display device, and
  - (b) displaying information
    - (i) based on the data conferencing signals
    - (ii) in a second window on the video display device.

24. The method of claim 22, wherein

  - (a) the step of displaying information includes the substep of
    - (i) interactively displaying
    - (ii) the information
    - (iii) on at least two of the video display devices.

25. A video communication system  
for operation with an infrastructure including  
at least one video signal source;  
at least one video display device;  
an unshielded twisted pair of wires of  
defining a  
video signal path,  
arranged for transport of video signals; and

the system comprising:

- at least one control communication link,  
arranged for transmission of control signals,
- (a) control components configured
- (i) to respond to control signals
    - (1) transmitted over the control communication link,
  - (ii) to control the transport of video signals
    - (1) generated by a video signal source,
    - (2) along the video signal path,
    - (3) to at least two workstations, and
  - (iii) to cause video image reproduction
    - (1) based the transported video signals
    - (2) on at least one of the video displays.

26. The system of claim 25, further comprising

- (a) a switch
- (i) in communication with the video signal path, and

wherein the control components are further configured to

- (ii) control the switch
- (iii) to route the video signals
  - (1) from at least one video signal source,
  - (2) to at least one video display device,
  - (3) along the video signal path.

27. The system of claim 26, wherein the control components include

- (a) at least one server
  - (i) configured to
    - (1) control the switch.

28. The system of claim 26, wherein

- (a) at least two video display devices
  - (i) each have an associated processor
  - (ii) to each define a workstation, and

wherein the control components are configured

- (a) to control the reproduction of video images and spoken audio
  - (i) of a first workstation user
  - (ii) at the workstation of a second workstation user.

29. The system of claim 29, wherein

- (i) the video images are reproduced
- (ii) at greater than 20 frames per second.
- (iii) on at least one of the video display devices.

30. The system of claim 30, wherein

- (a) the video signals are transported in analog.

31. The system of claim 32, wherein

- (a) the video images are reproduced in color.

32. The system of claim 30, wherein the control components are configured

- (a) to combine video images

- (i) of at least a first and a second user

- (ii) into a mosaic image, and

- (b) to reproduce the mosaic image

- (i) on at least one of the video display devices.

33. The system of claim 29, wherein the control components are configured

- (a) to allow a first user

- (i) to use a first graphical user interface

- (ii) to select a user

- (iii) from a plurality of users; and

- (b) to allow the first user

- (i) to use a second graphical user interface

- (ii) to select a collaboration type

- (iii) from a group of collaboration types; and

- (c) to respond

- (i) by establishing communication

- (ii) of the selected collaboration type

- (iii) from the first user
- (iv) to selected user.

34. The system of claim 29, wherein the system is configured to
- (a) generate data conferencing signals;
  - (b) transmit the data conferencing signals
    - (1) to at least one of the display devices, and
  - (c) display video images,
    - (1) based on the transported video signals,
    - (2) on the video display device; and
  - (d) display information,
    - (1) based on the transmitted data conferencing signals,
    - (2) on the video display device.

35. The system of claim 35, wherein
- (a) images
    - (i) based on the video signals
    - (ii) can be reproducedin a first window on the video display device, and
  - (b) information
    - (i) based on the data conference signals
    - (ii) can be displayed
    - (iii) in a second window on the video display device.

36. The system of claim 35, wherein

- (a) the information
  - (i) based on the data conferencing signals
  - (ii) is displayed
  - (iii) interactively
  - (iv) on at least two of the video display devices.

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